

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASS BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3883

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 10506

FOR WILSON (D/HA/ORM) FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF

SUBJ: INDOCHINA REFUGEE PROGRAM-- RELATIONS WITH VOLAGS

REF: (A) STAT 093293, (B) BANGKOK 9877

1. I AGREE WITH YOU THAT THE PROBLEM OUTLINED IN REFTTEL A IS FUNDAMENTAL AND IN THE FACE OF POSSIBLE EXPANDED PAROLE PROGRAM WE WELCOME DISCUSSION OF HOW BEST TO DEAL WITH THE QUESTION OF DELAYED REFUGEE DEPARTURES. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES TO A DEGREE GAUGE THE SUCCESS OF THE REFUGEE PROGRAM ON THE BASIS OF THE PROMPTNESS OF REFUGEE ARRIVALS AND WE WILL CERTAINLY NEED MAXIMUM EFFORT BY THE VOLGAS IN WEEKS AHEAD.

2. BEFORE ADDRESSING THE QUESTION OF HOW BEST TO HANDLE DELAYED DEPARTURES, THE FOLLOWING GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ARE OFFERED WHICH MAY BE USEFUL FOR YOUR UPCOMING VOLGA MEETING.

A. WHILE DELAYS WILL CONTINUE TO CROP UP BECAUSE OF ILLNESS AND ADD-ON FAMILY MEMBERS, CENTRAL POINT IN LAO MVEMENT QUESTION IS THAT PRESENT LAO RATE OF MOVEMENT OF 150 PER WEEK IS BEING SLOWED THE LAST WEEK OF APRIL OWING TO LACK OF A SUFICIENT NUMBER OF VERIFIED SPONSORSHIPS. IN FACT THE DELAY FACTOR DUE TO REFUGEE PROBLEMS MEANS WE NEED MORE VERIFIED SPONSORSHIPS EACH WEEK THAN WOULD BE THE CASE IF EVERYONE WAS PREPARED TO MOVE ON RECEIPT OF VERIFICATION. VOLAGS SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT WHILE WE TRY TO AVOID DELAYS, CONFIDENTIAL

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THEIR ROLE IN SUSTAINING THE SPONSORSHIP RATE IS KEY TO

MAINTAINING PRESENT MOVEMENT RATE.

B. THERE ARE SOME CASES IN WHICH WE HEAR FROM A SPONSOR ABOUT A "DELAYED ARRIVAL" EVEN THOUGH THE REFUGEE MOVED VERY QUICKLY AFTER VERIFICATION WAS RECEIVED. THIS IS DUE TO TWO REASONS: SPONSOR OFTEN HEARS FROM REFUGEE DIRECTLY VERY EARLY IN THE PROCESS-ON OCCASION EVEN BEFORE THE REFUGEE IS A-NUMBERED. FROM THIS TIME ON WHENEVER THE REFUGEE ARRIVES IT WILL BE AFTER A "DELAY" FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THAT SPONSOR. ALSO IN SOME CASES THE SPONSOR MAKES AN OFFER WHICH TAKES A LONG TIME TO BE VERIFIED AT U.S. END. BY THE TIME THE VERIFICATION CABLE REACHES US THE REFUGEE IS ONLY OVERDUE IN THE EYES OF THE SPONSOR. IT MAY BE THAT VOLAGS ARE NOT DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN SPONSOR COMPLAINTS ABOUT DELAY WHICH IS SOMETIMES DUE TO VOLAG SLOWNESS IN VERIFYING SPONSORSHIP AND THOSE COMPLAINTS STEMMING FROM DELAYED DEPARTURE FROM THAILAND. THE ABOVE IS NOT MEANT TO BE CRITICAL OF VOLAG ROLE BUT IS TO ILLUSTRATE THAT THE DELAYED ARRIVAL PROBLEM IS MORE MULTIFACETED THAN SIMPLY DELAYS IN MOVING REFUGEES OUT OF THAILAND. IT IS IMPORTANT TO GET THIS ACROSS SINCE AT THIS UNCTURE WE ARE DEPENDENT ON AN INCREASED FLOW OF VERIFICATIONS IF WE ARE TO RESTORE THE ICEM RATE OF MOVEMENT IN EARLY MAY.

3. THUS FAR EMBASSY HAS PROVIDED NOTIFICATION OF DELAY ONLY IN INSTANCES WHERE INQUIRY WAS RECEIVED. NOW THAT ICEM IS IN EXPANDED ROLE, WE WILL MOVE IMMEDIATELY TO NOTIFICATION ON ALL FUTURE POST- VERIFICATION DELAYS AS WELL AS EXPLANATION OF DELAY FOR THOSE REFUGEES WITH VERIFIED SPONSORS WHO ARE ALREADY BOGGED DOWN WITH PROBLEMS. ICEM/BANGKOK IS WILLING TO UNDERTAKE THIS RESPONSIBILITY, INVESTIGATING AND DRAFTING REPORTING CABLES ON DELAY CASES WHICH WILL BE TRANSMITTED BY EMBASSY TO ORM ON ALL POST-VERIFICATION DELAYS. INITIALLY ICEM WILL PREPARE REPORTS ON EACH PA AND FAMILY DELAYED AMONG THE 158 CITED REFTELS. ICEM WILL THEN PICK UP REPORTS ON DELAYS AS THEY OCCUR.

4. THE PROPOSAL THAT ICEM GIVE TWO WEEK LEAD-TIME PRIOR TO MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES DOES NOT SEEM WORKABLE FOR A PROGRAM INVOLVING LARGE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES. THE ENLARGED TRANSIT CENTER CONCEPT CALLS FOR RAPID THROUGH-PUT OF REFUGEES AND

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MAXIMUM USE OF AVAILABLE COMMERCIAL AIR; TWO WEEKS NOTICE WOULD THEREFORE SERVE TO DELAY DEPARTURES. CORCOS AGREES WITH THIS ASSESSMENT.

5. ALTERNATE PROPOSAL THAT VOLAGS SEND CASE OFFICERS TO BANGKOK WOULD APPEAR TO OFFER GOOD POSSIBILITIES. WE SUGGEST THAT ONE REPRESENTATIVE FOR ALL VOLAGS BE SENT TO EXAMINE SITUATION ON THE SCENE. WE WOULD HOPE THAT THIS REPRESENTATIVE

COULD THEN REMAIN TO WORK WITH ICEM ON NOTIFICATION OF DELAYED
CASES. IN THIS CAPACITY ONE VOLAG REPRESENTATIVE WOULD SCREEN
ALL DELAYED CASE REPORTS PREPARED BY ICEM AND ADD ANY ADDITIONAL
INFO OF USE TO VOLAGS AS WELL AS LINKING VOLGAS WITH SITUATION
ON THE GROUND IN THAILAND. THE VOLAG REPRESENTATIVE SHOULD
COME PREPARED TO REPRESENT ALL VOLGAS. THIS WOULD BE OUR
INITIAL CONCEPT. SUBSEQUENTLY, IF INDIVIDUAL VOLAG
REPRESENTATIVES APPEAR PREFERABLE, WE WILL SUGGEST THIS ADDITIONAL
STAFFING.
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